

P L A N N I N G C O M M I S S I O N

ACTION MINUTES

TUESDAY, JULY 17, 2001

Chair Parsons called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. at the Twin Pines Senior and Community Center.

ROLL CALL:

Present, Commissioners: Parsons, Wiecha, Gibson, Torre, Purcell

Absent: Mathewson, Petersen

Present, Staff: Community Development Director Ewing, Principal Planner de Melo, Associate Planner Ouse, Deputy City Attorney Savaree, Recording Secretary Flores

AGENDA STUDY SESSION: None

AGENDA AMENDMENTS: None

COMMUNITY FORUM (Public Comments): Resident

Denny Lawhern from the Belmont Historical Society stated the application for 1240 Elmer Street was reviewed by the Planning Commission on May 1st 2001. Mr. Lawhern stated this property is listed on The Historical Resources list and requires specific procedures to either declassify, move it or tear it down. He requested the application be reviewed again by staff to assure that proper procedures were followed and to assure that proper procedures are followed in the future in regarding Historical Buildings.

Mr. Lawhern referred to the City Code Guidelines and The Historical Resource Inventory Document for reference on proper procedures regarding decision making on any Historical Building.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

Minutes for 6/6/01

Excerpt Minutes from 3/7/01 – 470 Ralston (Arco)

MOTION: By Commissioner Wiecha, seconded by Commissioner Gibson, to approve the consent calendar.

Ayes: Parsons, Wiecha, Gibson, Purcell, Torre

Noes: None

Absent: Mathewson, Petersen

Motion passed 5/0/2

STUDY SESSION : None

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Public Hearing – 1500 Ralston Avenue: Study Session to consider Phase I of a Detailed Development Plan (DDP) for Notre Dame de Namur University which includes construction of a new 42,000 square foot residence hall, 19,000 square foot campus center, surrounding landscaping and review of Design Guidelines for future development. The Conceptual Development Plan (CDP) for the project was approved by the City Council on October 24, 2000.

(Appl. No. 01-0095) APN: 044-360-070, 100, & 120; Zoned: PD (Planned Development)Maureen Freschet (Applicant) Notre Dame de Namur University (Owner)

Planning Commission did not have a quorum for this item. Continued to date uncertain.

Public Hearing – 3260 Upper Lock Avenue To consider a Single-Family Residential Design Review, residence and seek a waiver from the requirement to provide a road improvement plan on an unimproved road at 3260 Upper Lock Avenue.(Appl. No. 01-0013)APN: 043-203-420, -430; Zoned: HRO-2/R-1B G.R. Ward, AIA (Applicant) Elena Orel (Owner)

Motion by Commissioner Wiecha, Second by Commissioner Torre to continue 3260 Upper Lock Avenue to a date uncertain.

AYES: Parsons, Wiecha, Gibson, Purcell, Torre

NOES: None

ABSENT: Mathewson, Peterson

Motion Passed: 5/0/2

Public Hearing – 1645 El Camino Real

To consider a Preliminary Design Review to construct a four-story, 34,860 square foot Hawthorn Suites hotel at 1645 El Camino Real. The 32-room hotel development includes lobby area, laundry rooms, breakfast room and small meeting room on the 16,695 square foot site. 33 off-street parking spaces are also provided.(Appl. No. 01-0075)APN: 045-252-090, Zoned C-3Vinu Shah (Applicant) Suraj Investment Group LLC (Owner)

AP Ouse summarized the Staff Report. No questions were asked of staff from the Commission.

Developer Hiten Suraj from Suraj Investment Group LLC, gave a brief description of the Hotel including landscaping and amenities.

A representative (no name stated) for the California Region of Hawthorn Suites, a subsidiary of Hyatt Hotel described the property and stated the size of the suites to be 400ft. The Representative stated it is a limited service hotel which has no restaurant.

C Wiecha stated that it appeared there were utility vaults or manholes in the area where landscaping was proposed. She questioned if there was an easement on the east side of the property and inquired about the width of the easement. Developer Suraj replied the width of the easement was 17 feet. C Wiecha questioned

parking requirements, Mr. Suraj replied it was required that only one parking space needed to be provided for staff and one per guest room.

C Torre questioned if the height variance requested was consistent with the trademark of the Hawthorn Suites design. Developer Suraj replied the break in the roof line was to add character and to provide a visual monument for motorists looking for the hotel. C Torre stated the location of the hotel would be hidden behind the buildings in the front and questioned what type of signage was being considered. Mr. Suraj replied they may propose a monument entrance sign on El Camino that would not block any views.

C Parsons opened the Public Hearing. No one came forward to speak.

MOTION By Commissioner Purcell, seconded by Commissioner Wiecha, to close the public hearing.

Motion passed.

C Parsons felt that the project was far too large for the site and that more amenities were needed for the location. C Parsons was concerned regarding safety access for fire trucks to get to and from the building. He stated that the project must have sidewalks with curbs & gutters to the site. He felt a traffic study for this project would be appropriate and finally he felt the project needed far more landscaping than proposed.

C Gibson agreed with C Parsons comments and added to consider the amount noise from the trains passing by 15 ft from the hotel room windows. C Gibson also made mention of a study phase regarding high speed rail and additional passing tracks to expedite express train service. He stated he would hate to see that right-of-way destroyed by development.

C Torre felt a hotel in this area would be fine, and would not have a problem with the conditional use permit. However, she felt this particular project was exceptionally large for the location. If it were redesigned to be in compliance with the 1.5 floor area ratio and height requirements, she could potentially vote for it. However C Torre reiterated that the size of the project is too large for the size of the lot and that she would not vote in favor of this project as it is presented

C Purcell agreed with her fellow commissioners comments and felt that this was a poor site for a hotel, partly due to the train noise and hidden location. Her opinion was that this hotel would not attract the high end market as there are other hotels in that area in better locations and have more amenities. C Purcell stated she would not be inclined to grant a variance for this project. She recommended finding another use for this site.

C Wiecha echoed all comments from the commission and added there would be no visibility of the hotel from El Camino. C Wiecha stated there are over 80 trains per day to soon increase to 100 per day, density is too high, parking is not adequate for employees and the landscaping does not meet standards. Recommendation for another location for this project was suggested.

End of Comments.

7D. Public Hearing – 1355 Shoreway Road

To consider a Design Review application to construct a new standby generator system for the Jameco/Arndt Electronics property. The system consists of a 230-kilowatt diesel generator on a new concrete pad, an automatic transfer switch, and electrical switchboard with divided distribution sections for utility and standby generator power. (Appl. No. 01-0083)APN: 040-371-120; Zoned: M-1 (Limited Manufacturing)Chip Lawton, Tri-Power Group Inc. (Applicant)Jameco/Arndt Electronics (Owner)

PP DeMelo summarized the staff report and answered questions from the commission.

C Torre stated she does not believe that design review is the only requirement appropriate for this review.

CDD Ewing stated the Planning Commission could recommend a Conditional Use Permit if they believe it is required.

C Torre felt this is of serious concern as California is in an energy crisis and suffers black outs. What concerns her most as a member of the Planning Commission is that if the Commission is going to look at this situation and consider that an emergency generator is a permitted use not subject to a conditional use permit, we won't have any basis to stop 100 more applications for emergency generators. These generators run on diesel fuel – which is far more polluting than natural gas.

C Gibson asked staff if the issues of emissions and air quality are something that the code allows us to consider.

CDD Ewing stated these items may be considered by the Commission, and quoted from the code section 6.2.1 in the manufacturing district M1: "General Conditions of Use, the regulations set forth in this section shall apply to all and any M1 district it shall be subject to all the general provisions of this ordinance." It goes on to say: No use shall be permitted the nature or manner of operation of which, shall be determined by the zoning administrator to be unduly hazardous or injurious to other properties in the vicinity or to the general public welfare by reason of the emission of odor, dust, smoke, noise, vibration, electrical or other disturbance." CDD Ewing indicated that this statement is a blanket performance standard that allows the Commission to reject anything that does not meet that test. This project will also require a Bay Area Air Quality Management District Permit.

Applicant representing Jameco, Gregory Tidwell stated the need for the generator is to keep their business running during random blackouts due to natural disasters as well as rolling blackouts for short periods of time. With the threat of a power outage 1 hour can equate from \$10,000 – \$12,000 in lost sales.

Bob Croshaw, CEO for Jameco, stated that his primary concern is to keep his company up and running so as not to lose business. He went on to say that one way to accomplish this is the assurance of the back up generator in times of a power crisis. He went on to say the approximate cost of this generator was \$50,000. The installation and planning is approximately another \$50,000.

In total this is a \$100,000 insurance policy.

Mr. Croshaw stated they are applying for a permit through BAAQMD for an emergency generator.

The normal maintenance for the generator requires it to run approximately 20 minutes per month. Other than the maintenance, it will only be run in the case of a power outage.

Chair Parsons opened the public hearing. No one came forward to speak.

MOTION By Commissioner Wiecha, seconded by Commissioner Purcell, to close the public hearing. Motion passed.

MOTION: By Commissioner Wiecha, seconded by Commissioner Gibson, to approve a Design Review application to construct a new standby generator system at 1355 Shoreway Road.

Ayes: Wiecha, Gibson, Purcell, Parsons

Noes: Torre

Absent: Mathewson, Petersen

Motion passed 4/1/2

Chair Parsons announced that this item may be appealed to the City Council within ten days.

REPORTS, STUDIES, UPDATES, AND COMMENTS

Design Review – Power Point Presentation – Presented by CDD Ewing.

CDD Ewing presented this to the City Council on April 10, 2001 as an introduction to the process for the review of Single Family Design Homes. The action taken for each step of the process can be categorized as either: administrative, Council policy, or a State requirement.

The process begins with the pre-application review. The applicant comes to the counter for requirement information on their property, staff provides them with forms and information about the process.

The pre- application can be more involved where the applicant schedules an appointment to meet with staff to go over plans, discuss variances, grading etc. The pre-application is any contact before the applications are submitted.

The next step is the submission of the application. At this time staff and the applicant or owner review the check list. It is determined by staff to accept the application or advise the applicant to return with missing items. All check list items must be submitted at the time staff accepts the application.

After the application is accepted, the information is input into the CRW computer tracking program. A file is created and assigned to a planner. Fifteen sets of plans are required at submission which are routed to various departments: Fire, Building & Safety, Parks & Recreation, Police, Public Works, City Arborist and a Traffic Consultant in certain cases for comment. CDD Ewing stated it would be unlikely to use a traffic consultant for a Single Family Home application. However, a traffic consultant would be considered for commercial projects.

Within 15 days of project submittal, staff receives and reviews all department comments. Comments are communicated to the applicant for redesign if necessary. This is point where staff determines if a project is complete. CDD Ewing stated it is mandated by the State of California that from the point of accepting the application, to determining if the project is complete, take no more than 30 days.

After determination of a complete project, staff performs a zoning conformance, site visit and design review. CDD Ewing mentioned for the record that the planners are looking at zoning conformance long before this point, however for this graphic presentation, this is the sequence it would occur. CEQA review would follow for the project. If categorically exempt, which most single family homes are, the environmental assessment is complete. For larger projects an initial study is prepared followed by a negative dec. Upon approval/denial of the project by the commission, the Neg Dec is posted with the county.

Following CEQA exempt status, a public notice for this item is sent to the newspaper 10 days before it appears before the Planning Commission. Staff reports and conditions are prepared, packets are put together for the Public Hearing. The total project time frame from submittal to hearing is 60-90 days.

The Commission gets the information on the project as well as policy and environmental context in terms of what are the applicable rules and findings to test the project. The commission then conducts a site visit, meets with the applicant, and hears from the neighbors. Testimony is heard, decisions are made. The staff will then prepare a resolution. It is an administrative task to provide a written record of the Commissions actions.

A ten day appeal process begins. If an appeal is filed, the process is repeated. A public notice is issued, staff reports are prepared, a public hearing is conducted and a resolution is finalized through the City Council. If no appeal is filed after the Planning Commission action, the file is closed.

The project is complete at the Planning - Zoning level. The applicant takes their resolution and conditions to the building department. The Design Review Presentation concluded.

PRESENTATION:

RESOLUTION 2001-81 OF APPRECIATION FOR COMMISSIONER GLORIA PURCELL FOR HER SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY.

The meeting adjourned at 10:06 p.m. to a regular meeting on August 7, 2001 at 7:00 p.m. at Twin Pines Senior and Community Center.

Craig A. Ewing, AICP

Planning Commission Secretary

*Audiotapes of Planning Commission Meetings are available for review
in the Community Development Department.*

Please call (650) 595-7416 to schedule an appointment